MD0T celebrates

BLACK HISTORY month

African-American Entrepreneurs



Madam C. J. Walker
Civil Rights Activist,
Philanthropist, Entrepreneur
(1867-1919)

Madam C. J. Walker, born Sarah Breedlove, created specialized hair products for African-American hair and was one of the first American women to become a self-made millionaire.

Early Life: Breedlove was the 5th child born to Owen and Minerva and was the first in the family to be free-born. Sarah found herself orphaned at age seven and went to live with her sister and brother-in-law. They moved to Vicksburg, MS in 1877 where she picked cotton and did household work.

At age 14, to escape her oppressive working environment and frequent mistreatment from her brother-in-law, she married Moses McWilliams. On June 6, 1885, Sarah gave birth to her daughter, A'Lelia. Her husband would die two years later.

Sarah and her daughter then moved to St. Louis where her brothers were already established as barbers. She worked as a washerwoman, earning \$1.50 day so she could send her daughter to the city's public schools. Sarah attended public night school whenever she could. During this time, she met her second husband, Charles J. Walker. Mr. Walker worked in advertising and would later help promote her business.

Accomplishments: Sarah's own scalp disorder lead to the development of a hair care treatment for African Americans. It was her husband who encouraged her to use the more recognizable name "Madam C. J. Walker" by which she was thereafter known. In 1907, Madam Walker and her husband traveled around the South and Southeast promoting her products and giving lecture demonstrations of her "Walker Method." This involved her own formula for pomade, brushing and the use of heated combs.

In 1908, Walker opened a factory and a beauty school in Pittsburg, and by 1910 she transferred her business operations to Indianapolis. The company in Indianapolis not only manufactured cosmetics, but trained sales beauticians, known as "Walker Agents". Walker also organized clubs and conventions for her agents, where not only successful sales were highlighted, but also philanthropic and educational efforts among African Americans. Madam Walker went on to found philanthropies that included educational scholarships and donations to homes for the elderly and other organizations focused on improving the lives of African Americans. She also donated the largest amount of money by an African American toward the construction of the Indianapolis YMCA in 1913.



Edward Lewis Publisher, Co-Founder of Essence Magazine (1940-)

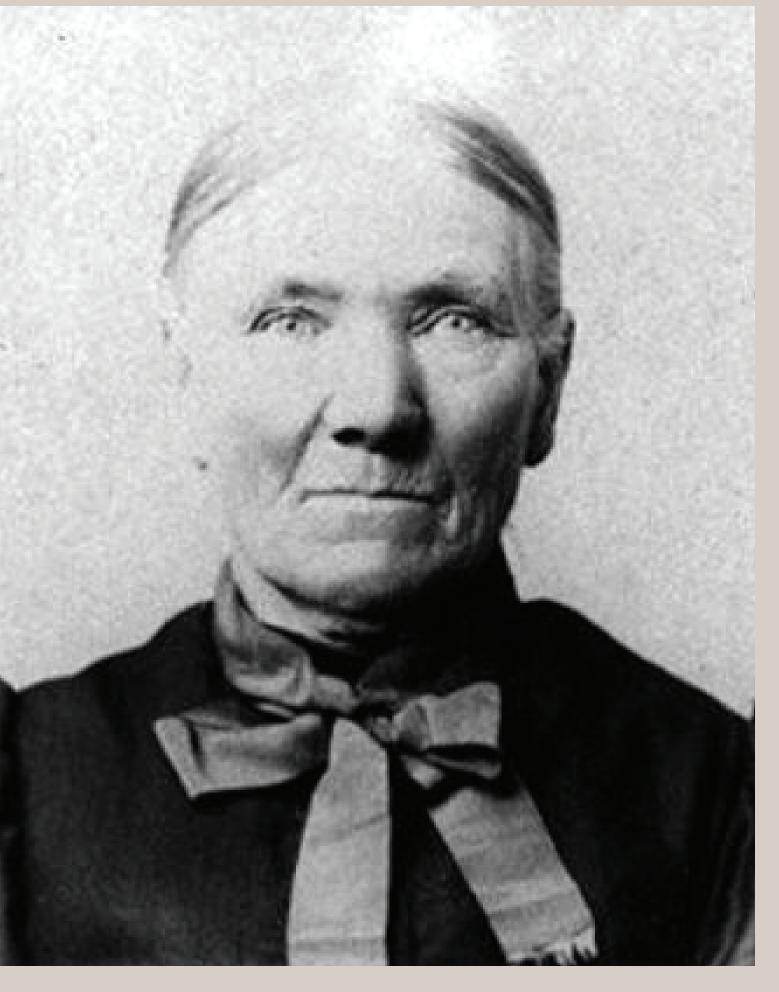
Edward Lewis is considered one of the premier publishers and entrepreneurs of his generation and a pioneer in the field of minority journalism.

Education: Lewis attended De Witt Clinton High School where he was not only a scholar, but star fullback on the football team. He went on to attend the University of New Mexico on a football scholarship. Out of over 8,000 students, Lewis was one of only 12 black students on campus. Attending college at the height of the Civil Rights Movement, Lewis studied the teachings of Dr. Martin Luther King and Malcolm X and became very outspoken about the movement. This caused Lewis to lose his football scholarship. He continued his studies and graduated with a Bachelor's degree in political science and international relations in 1964.

Accomplishments: He began his career in the banking industry in 1965 with First National City Bank in New York. Despite being on track to becoming a loan officer, he discovered a new interest and was determined to start his own uniquely black business. In 1969 Lewis along with Clarence O. Smith founded Essence Magazine. The first issue was published in May 1970 with a modest print run of 50,000. Today, Essence has a readership of more than 7.5 million. Essence has also expanded into a weekly television show, fashion line and mail order catalogue, as well as an annual awards show and music festival.

Lewis founded Latina Magazine in 1995, a bilingual publication geared toward Hispanic women.

In 1997, Lewis became the first black chairman of the Association of Magazine Media, representing over 700 publications.

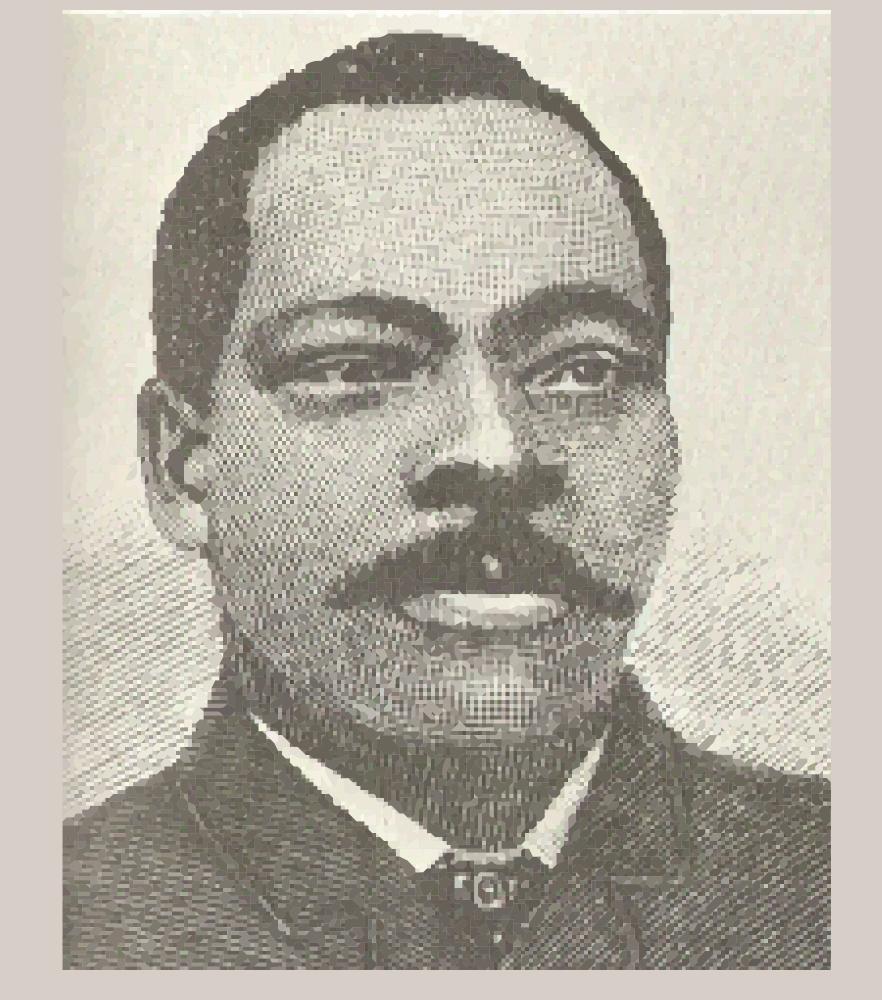


Sarah E. Goode
Inventor
(1850-1905)

Entrepreneur and inventor Sarah E. Good was the first African American to receive a United States patent.

Early life: Lewis received her freedom at the end of the Civil War and moved to Chicago.

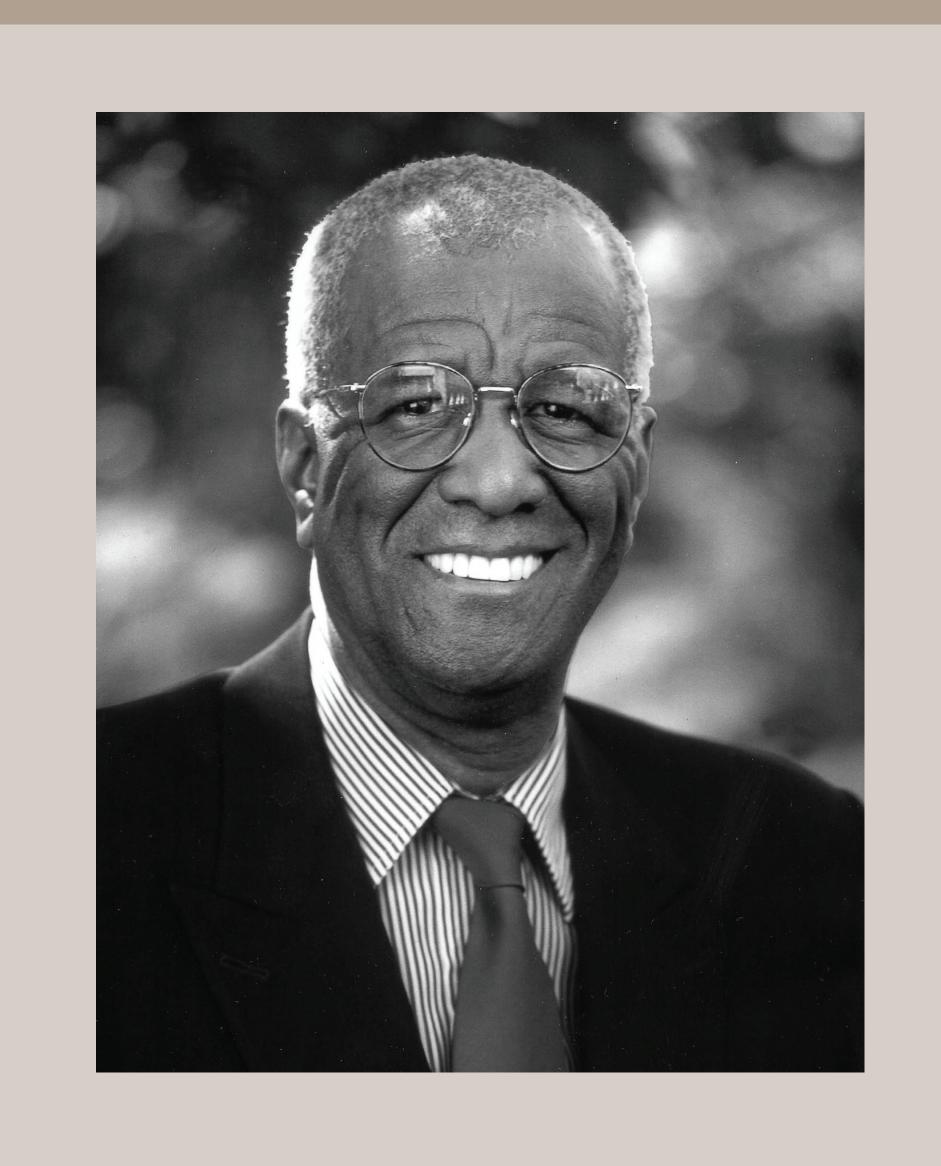
Accomplishments: Sarah E. Goode was the first African-American woman to be granted a patent by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office for her invention of a folding cabinet bed in 1885. Lewis and her husband Archibald, a carpenter, owned a small furniture store. Many of her customers lived in small apartments and had very little room for furniture and as a solution to the problem she invented the cabinet bed. When the bed was not in use it could be used as a roll-top desk, complete with compartments for storage. It is very similar to the Murphy Bed of today.



Augustus Jackson Chef, Inventor (1808-1852)

After working as a White House chef in the 1820s, Augustus Jackson invented new recipes and a better technique for making ice cream.

Accomplishments: After working at the White House, Augustus Jackson returned to his hometown of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and went into business for himself as a caterer and confectioner. Jackson developed an improved method for making ice cream and began selling his new creation to both street vendors and ice cream parlors. Jackson is sometimes referred to as the "Father of Ice Cream" although he didn't invent it but he did create a number of popular ice cream recipes. He became one of the wealthiest African Americans in Philadelphia.



Wally Amos
Entrepreneur
(1936-)

African-American entrepreneur Wally Amos founded the famous Amos cookie brand. He also worked as a talent agent and discovered Simon & Garfunkel.

Education: In 1948 Amos moved to New York City to live with his Aunt Della, who often baked homemade cookies. Amos developed a penchant for cooking and later enrolled at the Ford Trades Vocational School and studied culinary arts.

Accomplishments: After a serving in the U.S. Air Force, Amos returned to New York in 1957. His next years were spent working in the stock room at Saks Fifth Avenue. He also worked in the mailroom at the William Morris Agency where in 1962, he became the first black talent agent in the history of the agency. He was determined to leave his mark on the industry and was able to do so by discovering the singing duo Simon and Garfunkel. Lewis went on to head the agency's newly formed rock 'n' roll department where he worked with other greats such Diana Ross, Marvin Gaye and Sam Cooke.

In 1967, Amos left the talent agency and moved to Los Angeles where he struggled financially. Amos began to take comfort in baking cookies using a modified version of his Aunt's recipe. The first Famous Amos cookie store opened on Sunset Boulevard in Los Angeles in 1975. Within months, Amos opened two more West Coast franchises, and the New York-based Bloomingdales department store had begun selling the gourmet cookies.

Due to poor management, Amos was eventually forced to sell off parts of his company. Shansby Group purchased Famous Amos Cookies in 1988 and changed it from a specialty item to a lower-priced product. In 1998, the Keebler Company purchased the Famous Amos brand, and Amos resumed his role as the brand's spokesperson.

In the mid-1990s, Amos launched a muffin company now known as Uncle Walley's Family of Muffins.

His other accomplishments include traveling as a motivational speaker and advocating for ending illiteracy in the U.S. He has also written 10 books.

